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TIPS on Personnel Management

for SUPERVISORS

from the Director of Personnel

Carl B Barnes



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To USDA Secretaries Stenos and Typists

NOTE TO SUPERVISORS:

This is the second "Tips to Supervisors" that really is not a tips to supervisors but a tips to his secretary, stenographer or typist.

This one emphasizes the technical skills and knowledges that need to be sharpened.

A number of secretaries in USDA, including OP's Secretaries' Forum, developed it. They have pooled their knowledge and know-how gained from their everyday experience here in USDA.

They have outlined herein those things they believe need to be kept constantly in mind to assure maximum utilization of skills and working tools.

So, Supervisors, will you pass this "Tips" sheet on to those of your employees who need to sharpen their knowledges in the skills mentioned.

Maybe you can even help them with a few suggestions with respect to certain peculiar requirements of your own office that might have served you more effectively.

Carl B Barnes

Carl B. Barnes
Director of Personnel



The backbone of any organization is its hard-working corps of secretaries, stenos and typists.

Yet their ratio to other types of employees often seems disproportionate.

In USDA it is 1 to 8+ as borne out by some figures recently compiled in OP.

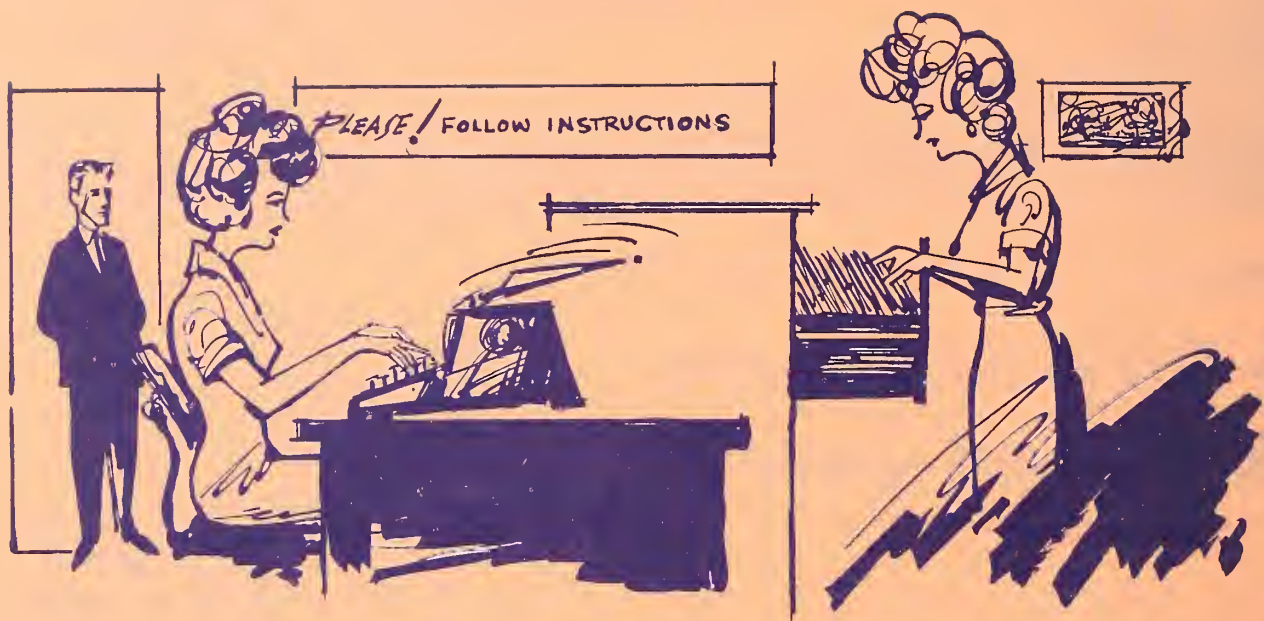
In other words, there are only 9,258 secretaries, stenographers and typists numbered among USDA's almost 80,000 employees - Washington and Field.

This presents a challenge to these girls to develop their expertise to a maximum of efficiency. Many of them already have, and are operating at peak proficiency.

Some of them are members of national professional secretarial associations and have earned the title of "Certified Professional Secretary."

However, with the heavy turnover in this occupational area, there is a constant influx of new and, sometimes, inexperienced personnel totally unfamiliar with USDA's operations and procedures.

This "Tips" sheet is addressed largely to them. But the more experienced also could find it useful in reevaluating their performance or as an aid in orienting newcomers or aiding the less experienced.



Like Tennyson's "Light Brigade" in the "Charge of the....."

"Theirs not to make reply
Theirs not to reason why...."

.....let's take a look at some of the ideas put down on the next few pages. Let's match our own performance against them — a sort of self-inventory — and see if we're "up to snuff" or whether we need to "shape up" a little — to get the JOB DONE!

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Benjamin Franklin said:

"Handle your tools without mittens."

So—o, let's "take off our gloves" — and "go to it!"

SHARPEN UP THE TOOLS OF YOUR TRADE

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is VERY IMPORTANT!

Listen to — and follow instructions! They are your "count down" before "blasting off" into "orbit."

If instructions are oral — and your MEMORY is not so good — WRITE them down! We know it's a nuisance — but DO IT anyway. Then you can refer to them when your memory fails you.

Whether you agree with these instructions or not — FOLLOW them. Don't change them to suit yourself! If they seem incorrect to you, check with the person who gave them. He'll be glad you did if they should happen to be wrong.

But — FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS! We cannot emphasize this enough. Failure to do so results in re-do's of a job, WASTE of TIME, and — very often — riled tempers!

U.S. GOV'T CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL:

ALWAYS follow the procedures outlined in this Manual, and supplements thereto.

It was prepared specifically for YOU. Its use is MANDATORY – you have no choice. The idea is to maintain uniformity in preparing correspondence, reports, etc., throughout the federal government.

Secretary Freeman – in the Manual's Foreword – says:

“The detailed information provided in the CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL is indicative of the obligation imposed on secretarial personnel to observe precise rules of procedure...”

Your individual agencies may have issued instructions supplemental to the Manual respective to their particular within-agency requirements. Follow them. Remember we said they “supplement” the Manual and in no way conflict with or nullify its procedures.

Be your own “looker-upper” when you're not sure how to proceed. Don't run to, or phone, someone else because it's easier to do it that way. That “someone else” may be a very busy operator and have to consult the Manual to boot. Don't be “lazy.” You waste her time and – that way – YOU'LL never learn anything.

GPO STYLE MANUAL:

Contains accepted federal government rules and practices on capitalization, spelling, compounding, punctuation, abbreviation, numerals and hyphenation.

You will find the basic information on these has been lifted from this Manual and appears in Part II, Chaps. 1–7, of your U.S. Gov't Corres. Manual – in case you don't have access to the GPO Style Manual itself.

Like the old riddle “Which comes first – the chicken or the egg?” Or the old “saw” – does the old man's beard go over or under the covers? Do the quotation marks go before or after the period?

Check the GPO Style Manual for the answer! And for any other punctuation, etc. questions that arise in the day's occupations.

A supplement to this Manual – a 3x5½-inch BRIGHT YELLOW covered book called “WORD DIVISION – 1962” is a mighty handy little tool on hyphenation of words. If you don't have one, ask your office to get you one. It has just about every word in the English language “broken” in the proper place.

DICTIONARY:

NEVER be without a good one at your fingertips! And USE it!

If you're not sure of the proper spelling of a word, don't take a chance on it. LOOK it UP!

If a word's meaning is obscure to you LOOK it UP!

Don't be like the typist – years ago – who had to copy something about the “IMMORTALITY of the Morgan horse”and decided the word should be “IMMORALITY”..... and had to hide in the lounge when thousands of copies went out all over the country...and her boss was after her with a cleaver!!

WORKBOOKS:

Many offices maintain loose-leaf binders of rules & regulations. Or office procedures. Chart books, books of standards – or what have you, which need constant “updating.”

If it falls to your lot to be the “keeper of the keys” on these try to be a good one. You – or the boss – may need to refer to them in a hurry. Woe to you if you hand him a book with an outdated portion still in it – because you DIDN'T take the TIME, when you had it, to insert a new amendment and pull out the old one! You may have to run and hide, too! After he's quoted it with confidence to someone – only to find he's been superseded!

DIRECTORIES:

USDA Telephone Directory – keep handy at all times – and insert supplements as issued.

City Phone Directory – we all have one. Don't use yours for a doorstep or chair cushion. And don't bury it. Be able to find it readily.

Congressional Directory – if its use is required in your work. Is convenient for reference for the correct spelling of

Senators' and Congressmen's names. Or high officials of government.

Contains other useful info such as the names and membership of Congressional Committees and biographical material on Gov't VIP's. For anyone needing this info, it also lists all newspaper correspondents and radio and TV news commentators.

Directory of Organization & Field Activities of USDA (Agriculture Handbook No. 76). This may be limited in supply – so don't ask for one unless its use is mandatory in your work.

U. S. Gov't Organization Manual – this likewise is in limited supply. Reference to it could be made at the Dept. Library and, in the field, undoubtedly any Public Library.

And speaking of the Dept. Library – this is a source for just about anything under the sun you'd need for reference purposes. You might need to refer to the World Almanac. They've got it. Or, Bartlett's Quotations if you have to check a "quote" your boss wants to use in a speech. Etc., etc.

At this point, we ask your indulgence as we pause to let you catch your breath. While you're doing it we want to say just one more thing about these Manuals and working tools. And that is this:

Between jobs – whenever there is a minute's pause in activities – study them and really learn what is inside. Remember – "you can't judge a book by its cover." Don't handle them as if they were time bombs! Open them up! They won't explode in your face....READ, STUDY, and LEARN them..PLEASE?

OFFICE:

See that the furniture, typewriters, bookcases, desk lamps, etc. are properly arranged. Then you won't have to call into play your acrobatic skills to get in and out of the office – or break your neck tripping over light cords.

Keep your OFFICE neat and orderly. Don't have it looking as if a CYCLONE just hit it! Get rid of old coffee cups and cigarette butts. Above all, keep materials of any kind OFF the TOPS of FILE CASES. It looks – and is – sloppy.

DESK:

Have plenty of free working area – only the barest essentials atop it – a place for everything and everything in its place. Arrange to have plenty of light.

Don't have your desk so cluttered you can't find a thing – or you lose those important phone messages you'd written down for the boss – or notes to yourself. You COULD OVERLOOK something IMPORTANT that's buried in the rubble. Don't take CHANCES!

And don't be a pack rat by choking the inside of your desk with odds and ends you keep meaning to throw away. Do it NOW – so you won't be embarrassed to tears when someone comes in to "sub" for you and discovers the mess.

TELEPHONE:

Don't keep knocking it off the desk or whacking it with your typewriter carriage. Keep it clean and well dusted. Don't let its dial "face" get so grimed up you can't see its numbers for looking. This instrument is your "open sesame" to the "wide blue yonder." You know what happens when it gets out of kilter....

TYPEWRITER:

This piece of equipment should be the "pride of your existence." Handle it with loving care.

It descends from a long line of ancestors – the earliest, a "contraption" born in 1833 and "christened" – "A. TYPEWRITER."

See that it is covered every night when you leave the office.

Keep your TYPE clean. Especially those e's and p's, o's b's, w's and m's – and all those other letters that "gum" up and come out on your typed copy looking like "black eyes." Your work should have "eye" appeal – but not "black" ones!

Keep your keyboard clean too – dirty keys lead to dirty fingers which lead to smudges on copy. Also, keeping the rollers – top and bottom – clean will "save face" for your copy – and you, too.

If you use an electric with a carbon ribbon – "listen" to

the little red band when it appears in the little "off" window on the right-hand side of your keyboard.

That's your WARNING — time's near for a "change." Get all the mileage you CAN out of it. But keep your eye peeled. If you're handed a RUSH job, better get a new ribbon on right quick so you won't run out smack in the middle of it. That's when fingers become thumbs and the blood pressure rises. And YOU get in a TIZZY in the mad scramble to make the change.

SUPPLIES:

Make sure you replenish — before you run out.

Whether you order your own or your office does it for you — keep one ahead of that "fresh out" predicament.

Don't ever let yourself be caught in the position of having to run around borrowing because you've used up the last envelope, pink jacket, paper or letterhead.... and need one right in the middle of a priority letter... and maybe you're alone in the office and can't even run out to borrow.... and no messenger or anyone can run to your aid...

If YOU are responsible for replenishing supplies please, PLEASE see that you carry out this responsibility. You may look upon it as a boring "housekeeping" task — but, if neglected — it can soon cause a lot of "fireworks!"



MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR SKILLS



TYPING SKILL

There is nothing more pleasing to the official eye than a nicely set up letter or report — fresh and clean looking and free of errors.

Use some imagination in your typing. Make it a work of art! Center your material nicely so your margins balance. Line up your headings using some symmetry.

Don't ever turn in letters — or copy — that look as if they'd been dropped in the barnyard and walked over by the chickens.

If you make errors — and who doesn't — try some of the correction paper now on the market. It comes for both original and carbons. If you haven't been exposed to it, ask your supply clerk to get you some. It obliterates the error and leaves a nice clean correction. It outmodes the eraser-brush technique — saves time, too, when you have a lot of carbons.

And while we're on the subject of carbon copies — see that all of yours are easily readable. If necessary, make a second run when a large number are involved. And be sure the carbon paper you're using isn't some that's been beat to ribbons. See that your cc's are so clear that someone besides yourself — who may not have your 20-20 vision — can read them too.

As far as that goes, see that your original copies are clear also. If you use a fabric ribbon be sure to change it as soon as it loses its "lustre" and begins to grow dim.

If you've lost some of your facility for typing — your speed has slackened its pace and errors slow it down even more — try to get in some typing practice.

There are a number of ways you can do this:

- 1 Register at a convenient business school for a typing refresher course....sorry, D.C. employees, the USDA Graduate School doesn't hold typing classes.
- 2 If you're lucky enough to have a typewriter at home, take your own refresher course there. Get out the old typing book you had at school, practice some of the exercises and review your typing short cuts and techniques you may have forgotten.
- 3 Failing #'s 1 & 2, try staying a night or two each week at the office and practice your a-s-d-f-g-f ;-l-k-j-h-j and your 09878 234565, plus The quick brown fox...and Now is the time....

Some of you are called upon occasionally — or maybe as a regular thing — to cut stencils and do offset plates or mechanical negatives. Those of you, who do these frequently, have probably learned "the hard way" to make corrections skillfully. Others should read carefully the instructions for making corrections which you will find on the cartons containing these materials. Make your corrections precisely as instructed. Thousands of copies are usually made from these reproductive types of materials. A botched-up correction job, repeated that many times, could be pretty embarrassing — to someone.

We agree with Michelangelo who said long, long ago:

"Trifles make perfection,
and perfection is no trifle."

SHORTHAND SKILL

Did you know that as a shorthand writer you are practicing a skill that dates back to the days of the old Romans? We didn't either. The VIP's of these days have nothing on Cicero — his speeches, too, were reported in shorthand!

And the first successful system for "shorthand" the

English language came out in 1588. Gregg appeared on the scene in 1888 — with others following (or maybe preceding, we don't know) until today there are said to be 2,000 systems of shorthand in existence, for writing the English language. Imagine!

This is the ONE skill no steno — and we mean no — can afford to be weak in.

Because.....

"The Moving Finger writes;" so said Omar Khayyám,
"and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety
nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel
half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out
a Word of it."

To paraphrase him:

The dictator dictates his "brain" child..and moves on. If you fail to get it...neither his memory, your piety nor wit nor all your tears will "wash" back a word of it. It's gone ..forever!

Any steno — or secretary — who is weak in shorthand has many avenues open to her for improvement:

- 1 She can register for a dictation class at some convenient business school...or, what more convenient for D.C. employees than at the USDA Graduate School?
- 2 She can get some member of her family — or a kind-hearted friend — to dictate to her a couple of nights a week.
- 3 She can go home and turn on the radio or TV in the evenings and take down in shorthand a few speeches or news broadcasts for practice.
- 4 She can buy herself some "talking" records and give them a whirl on the hi-fi — controlling them for slow or fast speed.
- 5 She can get out her old school shorthand book and practice up on her "hieroglyphics."

As an old English proverb tells us,

"It's all in the day's work."

RECEPTIONIST SKILL

This is an area that would involve principally the secretary. On occasion — in a manpower (or womanpower, that is,) shortage — a steno or typist might be pulled in to do relief duty. So these remarks are addressed to all of you.

When a visitor enters your office, give him — or her — your full attention. Remember, we all are public servants. This visitor is one of the taxpayers who is paying your salary — whether he is from within or from outside the Department. It makes no difference.

In a manner of speaking, he or she is our boss. He's also your boss' boss. So, remember, your boss is no KING, you're no QUEEN, and the visitor is not your humble SUBJECT! Treat him courteously.

If your boss isn't available, explain why, offer a substitute who is knowledgeable on the subject of the visitor's errand, or set up a definite appointment to suit the visitor's convenience and to fit your boss' schedule. Don't be difficult. Don't act like a lioness guarding her young. Let him see the boss — he has a right to.

And don't keep persons with scheduled appointments "cooling their heels" in YOUR office. They have probably prided themselves on being "on time" and would like your boss to know it. The boss' schedule may be "running late" but don't go beyond 5 minutes to inform him his next appointment is waiting — and has been since the appointed time. Let the boss decide whether the "wait" should be prolonged. Sometimes it is unavoidable but explanations should be made to the scheduled appointment so he won't get too "hot under the collar."

SECRETARIAL "HUMAN RELATIONS" SKILL

One of your MOST important skills as a secretary is your ability to get along with EVERYONE and ANYone.

Of course, efficient and conscientious service to your boss is your first concern. You are there to get his work done speedily and to his satisfaction — and to keep the work of the office running smoothly.

This, alone, requires skills which — if you don't have — we'd ADVISE you to WASTE no time in DEVELOPING!

You have to have an even-tempered disposition, physical and mental capacity to do the work, the ability to remain calm under stress and strain, and a prodigious amount of patience when the going "gets rough."

If you are the top secretary in your office you have to be a MODEL — more or less — since YOU set the tone and pace for the other girls in your office. They will constantly look to YOU for guidance. They will expect YOU to "have all the answers" — and, believe us — you'd better come through!

The attitude you take toward these girls can mean your SUCCESS or your DOWNFALL! It will determine the measure for their loyalty and cooperation with you.

This is likewise true in your dealings with other secretaries around the Department. If you have any "rank" don't "pull it" on any secretary whose rank you may consider to be subordinate to yours because your boss happens to outrank her boss.

This is a cardinal sin some secretaries commit — but YOU should NEVER permit yourself to be guilty of it. If you need a reminder, just keep in mind that one of these girls' bosses may be your boss' boss....come the morrow! And some secretaries have long memories...when it comes to that.

Another skill you will need to possess is to keep your mind open to constructive suggestions. Don't act as if you "know it all." Take merited criticism "on the chin" and admit it when you're wrong.



Avoid the “big head.” If humility is not one of the “ingredients” in your makeup, cultivate a little. Be honest with yourself. Recognize there are probably many other girls – equally as able as yourself, and possibly even more so – who could do your job as well or better. Just don’t tempt someone to find it out!

SECRETARIAL JOB SKILLS

Let YOUR first concern be the things that are of first concern to the boss.

You are his “alter memory.” He depends on you to remember his appointments and remind him to return phone calls or when he has deadlines to meet.

Anticipate his needs. Have material he will need for a meeting ready and in his hands in sufficient time to digest it beforehand.

Be his mind reader – after putting through a phone call to him, he’ll be happy if you figure out what the person is calling about and run in with the proper file to aid him during the phone discussion.

A really good itinerary prepared for the boss prior to his field trip will be a big help not only to him but to yourself on his return when you have to type up his travel voucher. One that is complete with dates, arrival and departure times, info on mode of carrier, stopover points including hotel or motel names, names and addresses of persons with whom he will meet – all of these could turn out to be very valuable in case an emergency arose which required you to contact him.

When taking dictation, if a word gets by you, let the boss complete his thought. But, immediately after, ask for the “missed” word so he can retrieve it before it slips his memory altogether.

If your boss has a penchant for using a plural verb with a singular noun – or vice versa – don’t follow suit when you transcribe your notes. This is rare – but, occasionally, a cog slips – and this can happen. He’s depending on you to recognize it was a slipped cog and not bad grammar.

When the boss is giving you instructions, and you don’t quite get their full intent, let him finish what’s on his mind before you interrupt him for clarification.

If part of your duties as a secretary is to serve as “relief” for another secretary, try to familiarize yourself with the workings of that office. And do things as they are done by the girl you are relieving – not necessarily as you would do them in your own office. In other words, don’t foul up the works while she’s gone. Do it her way!

If you find yourself in a position where you have to review another’s work and have to send something back for correction where procedures haven’t been followed – don’t lose patience or be abrupt about it. And be sure YOU’RE right before you tell her she is WRONG. If you can – be specific. Don’t say

“I think this is wrong – – look it up.”

Instead, say, “This should be corrected to read ‘.....’ as you will see on page 3 of the Corres. Manual.” Use the “soft touch” – and you’ll get the corrected job back a lot quicker!

If you have a “cellmate” clue her in on your operations so the office continues to run smoothly when you’re out sick, on a day’s leave, or on vacation. Don’t try to be a one-woman ENCYCLOPEDIA who knows all about everything and then leaves a vacuum when SHE “checks out.” It may register as an asset with you – but add up to a liability in the eyes of your office!

You may have a boss who is willing to give you the opportunity to compose letters of courtesy for him – or those of a routine nature not involving policy.

If you lack facility in this area a course in Letter Writing might be in order. Check into possibilities at various schools around town, including, in D.C., USDA’s Graduate School. Take advantage of this evidence of your boss’ confidence in you and prove to him he wasn’t mistaken.

TELEPHONE SKILL

The moment you answer the telephone you become the official ambassador of your agency. Please remember THAT!

You can create a favorable “image” for your agency – or you can leave the caller with a very “bad taste in his mouth.”

Your tone of voice and attitude go right through that mouthpiece. Keep a “smile” in your voice. Be pleasant, courteous and helpful.

When the phone rings – answer it immediately.

Identify your agency. If your agency requires you to identify yourself, also – go ahead and do it....Some of us don't subscribe to this technique. Some of us feel it wastes time – and very often you can't catch the name anyway – it seems to fade out. Then we're embarrassed because we think the secretary expects to be called by name – and we can't do it and don't want to ask her to repeat it! But....be that as it may....we recommend that you do what your boss wishes you to in this respect.

Important – have paper and pencil in hand all ready to take notes on the call or a message – don't EVER say "Wait till I get a pencil – and oh, a piece of paper!"

If the person called is not available, SAY SO, but SAY SPECIFICALLY when he will be, and ask your caller if you may return the call – all in one "capsule!" Don't make him have to "pry" all this information out of you with a half dozen questions.



If the call is an urgent one that needs immediate attention – suggest a substitute of equal stature who may serve the caller's purpose just as well – save time and get his business taken care of without delay.

If the person called IS available, say so immediately and put him right on the line, without further ado. If you work for a boss who prefers that you DO NOT ask callers to identify themselves, be VERY CAREFUL to respect his wishes. If you wanted to make him "hopping mad" – to ignore his wishes would do the trick!

HOWEVER, if you work in an office where tradition has established – and protocol requires – that the secretary announce the identity of incoming calls, then you'd BETTER FOLLOW such procedure.

But do it in a manner that is wholly inoffensive to the caller. Never, but NEVER say "Who's calling?" as if you were DARING him to say so! Ask your caller politely "May I tell him who's calling?" as if you were going to introduce him to a friend.

Situations involving protocol need graciousness and skill in the handling. If the President were calling a Cabinet Officer, naturally the CA's secretary would get him on the line first – and so on down the line – provided, of course, the President had his secretary place the call.

Of course, if you picked up the phone and the PRESIDENT were on the other end of it.....after you regained consciousness we'd say you were strictly on your own!!!

One thing we'd hope, however – and that is, if your boss happened to be out of the office on this EXCITING occasion – you WOULDN'T ASK the PRESIDENT what HIS number was so you could call him back!

We said this facetiously but because we wanted to lead into a point we'd like to make – seriously. With so many officials placing their own calls these days it poses a problem if the boss is out and they simply say "Have him call me back." It would be a big help if you can get his name clearly – if you happen to be new in the Department and unfamiliar with who's who. Then you could look up his number later in the phone book without having to ask him. Of course, if you don't quite get the name it's best to ask it and the number, too, rather than miss an important call for the boss.

But for the girls who have been around for a while and should be familiar with the names of officials operating in their area, they should settle for the name and if they don't remember the phone number—LOOK it up—don't ask the man for it. It will only take a minute—and he'll hang up feeling he'd just had an EFFICIENT secretary on the line.

To save time, if two secretaries of bosses of equal rank are handling a call between them—get the caller and "callee" on the line simultaneously. Don't be "coy" and hang on the line until the other secretary has put her boss on and then waste his time while you seem to have to run down the hall to get your boss and bring him back to answer the phone. It takes some secretaries that long—so it seems—to get the boss on the phone. This is especially irritating if you are the one who placed the call in the first place!

And don't keep someone hanging on the line while you're ploughing the files to check something for him. A minute is long enough—longer, not only tries the patience of the caller but keeps your line giving off a "busy signal" and holds up other calls trying to get through from some official who has an urgent call for your boss.

And—while we're on the subject of tying up lines—don't tie them up with incoming or outgoing PERSONAL calls. Let your personal calls be of the rarest rarity—and only in an emergency.

If you get a call for information you don't have, leave it up to the caller whether he wants to be transferred to the proper office or would prefer YOU get the info. and call him back or have the proper person call him. NEVER transfer him if you don't know for sure that the office you're transferring him to can help him. He may already have been transferred to the "breaking point." Give him a break!

Make "thank you" two of the most important words in your vocabulary. "Thank you for waiting," "Thank you for the information," "Thank you for calling back"—etc., etc.

REMEMBER what we said at the beginning of this "little" discourse on Telephone Skill. YOU are your agency's AMBASSADOR the minute you pick up the phone and answer it. So-o, try to be a polished DIPLOMAT.

MAIL SKILL

Keep the mail moving. Attend to your "in" and "out" boxes frequently. Don't let mail pile up in them and slow down the "Works."

Be especially mindful of jacketed mail—the "pinks" and "yellows"—these should be given "priority" attention.

See that your mail is correctly addressed. And properly marked if it is AIR MAIL, SPECIAL DELIVERY, or REGISTERED. Such mail should be handled PROMPTLY and not allowed to lie around in someone's "out" box for a routine pick-up. If you don't have the services of a messenger, "walk it" yourself to your agency's mail room.

Likewise for CABLEGRAMS and TELEGRAMS. If you have the services of a messenger see that these are "walked through" for whatever clearances they need and then hastened to the Telegraph office, via your mail room. If a matter is important and urgent enough to be handled "gram-wise" either cable or tele—you'd better keep it moving along even if you have to do the moving yourself.

On urgent mail within the Department—that your boss wants Mr. So and So to have in 5 minutes—try to get a messenger to "hand carry" it, failing this—some other person in the office who is not busy at the moment—or failing both, take a walk with it yourself!

As you take incoming mail into your boss have it arranged in some kind of sequence. URGENT matters on top of the pile, ALWAYS! Then jacketed mail that needs his clearance; next, letters for his signature; letters from outside the Department (and if they are answers to previous correspondence please attach the file); memoranda from within the Department next; memoranda or material from members of the boss' own staff; and from there on down mimeographed and printed material arranged according to his interest and concern. This is just a suggestion. You may have a system of YOUR OWN worked out which HE (the boss) has asked you to follow. FOLLOW it, if you do. Remember HE is the boss.

Some secretaries have little "SIGNATURE" or "INITIALS" slips they tack onto mail to facilitate the boss' handling and save his time. They are really very helpful.

One last thing—STOP numbers on mail for other gov't agencies around Washington help the mail room when a thoughtful secretary looks them up and puts them down on the outgoing envelope. You help yourself, too, by remembering to do it. The mail room might be too busy to look it up and bounce the un-STOP-numbered piece of mail back to you. This causes delays—and could cause annoyance to your boss and the addressee who didn't receive said piece of mail in time!

Another last, LAST thing—but by no means least:

NEVER—but never, never—leave SECURITY CLASSIFIED MATERIAL (TOP SECRET, SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL) or ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL lying around conspicuously. Especially at night and over weekends. SEE that it is properly “SAFE-d” if it’s SECURITY CLASSIFIED material. If it’s ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL have it placed, preferably, in a locked file cabinet or, at the very least, in a locked desk! This is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT and is a MUST! Refer to Section 8 of the RECORDS SECURITY REGULATIONS (Revised March 14, 1958) for the custody and safekeeping of SECURITY CLASSIFIED material.

FILE SKILL

Do your filing at frequent intervals—daily, if possible. Don’t let it pile up.

If your office has a filing system, follow it. If it’s your OWN SYSTEM, be sure someone else in the office is “clued-in”—in case you’re away from the office sometime.

By making a special effort to do your filing daily—or during a “lull” in operations—you can avoid being caught “off guard” when something is needed in a hurry. It will save time and avoid confusion—and help you operate a lot more efficiently.

Be systematic—be neat—and be UP TO DATE in your filing!

Records not needed in current work should either be destroyed or transferred to the Federal Records Center in accordance with your agency’s instructions.



ADDENDA

SOME TIPS ON OFFICE ETIQUETTE SKILL

Be cooperative with other workers in your office in working out matters of leave, lunch periods, helping out with rush jobs, etc.

Don’t sit with folded hands and watch someone else break her neck getting out an emergency job—offer to help.



Don’t overstay your lunch period and “chisel” on somebody else’s time. She might be hungry, too. Besides she may have made plans to meet someone for lunch and have to cancel them.

And speaking of lunch plans, set up a lunch schedule with others, so they may know in sufficient time what time THEY may expect to eat! Or to make arrangements to meet a friend for lunch. Be fair when your actions can affect others.

If you have to leave the office at any time, let someone know WHERE you are going and WHEN you expect to be back. Some need for your presence might arise in your ABSENCE. It would help to know where you could be reached.

TRY to observe all the AMENITIES—DO unto others as you would want and EXPECT them to do unto YOU.



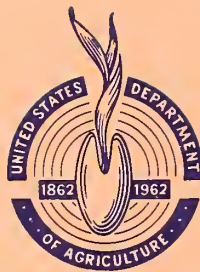
MESSAGE

IN CLOSING, we would like to make ONE request: ADD this “TIPS” sheet to your library of WORKING TOOLS. We urge YOU to READ it and absorb some of the THOUGHTS we have tried to get across to you.

IT IS OFFERED ONLY IN A SPIRIT OF HELPFULNESS and with the desire to share with you some of our knowledge gained through every day operations.

We SALUTE YOU! BEST WISHES for SUCCESS in handling the RESPONSIBILITIES of YOUR JOB and in your own SELF DEVELOPMENT.





Growth Through Agricultural Progress